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<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>This thesis examines Chiricahua Apache society from a cultural perspective asking on what was the continuity of the society based and how did the society reproduce itself as a whole. The focus is on the pre-reservation time, before the disruption of reservation life. The thesis goes through the nearly century-long discussion on social groups and society's foundations centering on exchange. The theoretical discussion starts from Claude Lévi-Strauss' "alliance theory" and works its way to Maurice Godelier's hypothesis on the dominant social relations of a society and the imaginary component of the social world. In the thesis it is argued that in order to analyze the social systems in any given society it is necessary to study also its culture, for only that way can one properly see the society as a whole and work one's way to its parts and the relations between these parts.</p> <p>The Chiricahua patterns of exchange varied from raiding to trade to generalized exchange and gift-giving. They projected their own society's social structure on to neighboring groups, just like the Americans and the Mexicans viewed the Chiricahua as a centralized tribe with which contracts could be made with and where both parties erred.</p> <p>The Chiricahua did not transform difference into hierarchy. Their social structure was egalitarian as the households (comprised of extended matrilineal families) - in accordance with the model of domestic mode of production - were the central units of production. They reproduced themselves as units similar to one another and were dependent on other households for their intergenerational continuity. Marriages required exchange of gifts, and at the basic level kinship - the reproduction of life - was connected to economics - the production of wealth.</p> <p>The continuity and reproduction of the Chiricahua Apache society relied more on the reproduction of certain relations (the atom of kinship) than the continuity of certain groups. The dominant social relations, those directly linked to production (society's infrastructure), were those within the household (matrilineal extended family).</p>			
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